

# Sexual Symbolism in the Language of the Air Force Pilot: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Folk Speech

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The psychological role played by folklore in reflecting the otherwise inexpressible attitudes, values, and beliefs of a people has long been acknowledged. Franz Boas noted as early as 1910 that seemingly fantastic events and motifs found in myth and tale sprang not from everyday occurrences, but from everyday wishes, or the actualization of internal fears and concerns in the external world.<sup>1</sup> Beginning primarily in the 1930s, studies such as Ruth Benedict's work on Zuni mythology examined narrative materials for both overt and covert evidence of social tensions, cultural stresses, and psychological aberrations.<sup>2</sup>

Yet interest in this approach on both a practical and theoretical level has been somewhat sporadic, particularly in terms of depth psychology and the patterning of symbolic expression. Textual interpretations of an essentially psychological (or psychoanalytic) nature have been relatively few in number,<sup>3</sup> due perhaps to both a

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1. Franz Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology*, Thirty-first Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology (Washington, D.C. 1916), 880.

2. Ruth Benedict, *Zuni Mythology*, Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology, 21 (New York, 1935). See also Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and his Society* (New York, 1939) and Margaret Mead, *Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World* (New York, 1949).

3. See Victor Barnouw, "A Psychological Interpretation of a Chippewa Origin

prudent hesitancy on the part of scholars to impose Western neuroses cross-culturally and a general awareness of the "abhorrence" with which such studies have traditionally been viewed within the field.<sup>4</sup> Genres beyond oral narrative, such as folk speech, have also been largely ignored.<sup>5</sup>

In illustration of the applicability of the psychoanalytic approach to a wider range of folkloristic materials, as well as an alternative to more traditional methodologies, the folk speech of United States Air Force pilots will be examined, particularly in terms of its apparently inherent sexual symbolism. The emphasis of the language in projecting the image of virility, its concern with the control of power, its expressions of anxiety and aggression, and its reflection of sexual fear and ambivalence, provide a particularly fertile ground for the application of psychoanalytic principles of interpretation to the study of expressive culture. By approaching folk speech as a projective system—capable of both reinforcing and releasing group fears and anxieties—this study may also serve to illuminate the mysterious attraction of flight, as well as the nature of the complex relationship that exists between man and aircraft.

Basic, perhaps, to a study of this body of material and its sexually oriented metaphor, is an awareness of the manifestations of protest masculinity that seem to underlie not only the language of the Air Force, but the entire structure of the military as well. The Air Force, as the youngest and most glamorous of the services, is keenly aware of the image it projects, not only in popular culture in general, but among the other military branches as well. A frequently heard Air Force joke tells of three servicemen who were out on a camping trip. The Army man and the Navy man sit around the campfire, swapping impressive accounts of their manhood, until the Air Force pilot stands up and silently begins to stir the coals with his penis.

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Legend," *Journal of American Folklore* 68 (1955): 73–85 and Melville Jacobs, "Psychological Inferences from a Chinook Myth, *Journal of American Folklore* 65 (1952): 121–137.

4. Richard M. Dorson, *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (Chicago, 1972), 25.

5. For some exceptions see Alan Dundes and Joseph C. Hickerson, "Mother Goose Vice Versa," *Journal of American Folklore* 75 (1962): 249–259; Alan Dundes, Jerry W. Leach, and Bora Özkök, "The Strategy of Turkish Boys' Verbal Dueling Rhymes," *Journal of American Folklore* 83 (1970): 325–349; and Ernest Jones, "The Symbolic Significance of Salt in Folklore and Superstition," in *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis*, vol. 2 (New York, 1964), 22–109.

The virile image is an unshakable one in the appearance, attitude, and language of the Air Force pilot. It is an image that is consciously reinforced and exploited. As an obviously impressed female journalist in Vietnam writes:

Most of the men look magnificently male in their flight suits [called "goat skins" or "sweat rags"]—a one-piece affair with neck-to-below-crotch zippers and pockets everywhere . . . and most men go unzipped to the navel. Flying crews have been the glamour boys since the beginning of flying machines. As far as Nails and Smash were concerned [note the sense of phallic aggression in the nicknames], they had grown accustomed to having women flock around them in romantic vertigo as if they were blue-ribbon studs from outer space.<sup>6</sup>

Peter Thorpe has described the emphasis placed on the virile image as it is first encountered in pilot training: "One of the most common shibboleths in which the flyer was obligated to believe was the proposition that the art of jet-flying was eminently manly. . . ."<sup>7</sup> Thorpe continued to describe the importance of contact sports within the training program, and, in off-duty hours, the subtle pressures to drink publicly and to pursue women.

While in pilot training, the student pilot or "stud" spends exactly fifty-three weeks learning how to fly. As he progresses from the T-41, Cessna-built "Flying Speedbrake," to the jet-powered T-37 "Tweety Bird," and finally to the supersonic T-38 "White Rocket," the student also learns the traditions, superstitions, songs, jokes, and special language that will both identify and unite him with all other Air Force pilots. At this time the student learns that a competent pilot is called a "good stick," a "hot stick," or simply a "stick"—an acknowledged reference to the aircraft's control level or "joy stick," which historically referred to a penis in the pilots' language.<sup>8</sup> The imagery in purely Freudian terms is also unmistakable, for as a good pilot may be praised in terms of his virility and

6. Elaine Shepard, *The Doom Pussy* (New York, 1967), 66–67.

7. Peter Thorpe, "Buying the Farm: Notes on the Folklore of the Modern Military Aviator," *Northwest Folklore* 2 (1967): 13.

8. John Brophy and Eric Partridge, *The Long Trail: What the British Soldier Sang and Said in the Great War of 1914–1918* (London, 1965), 138. Although the actual "stick" controls have long been replaced on most sophisticated types of aircraft by a wheel-like "yoke," the original and anachronistic term persists in the language.

virile member, so a poor, indecisive, or unaggressive pilot may be ridiculed. Called a "pussy" or a "weenie," he is taunted by allusions to either the female genitals or to an ineffectual, child-like phallus.

Pilots have often spoken of their aircraft as extensions of their own bodies, the result of an actual fusion of two separate entities into one. If the pilot, or "stick," is taken as a representation of the phallus, then, in turn, the machine that is physically attached by air hose, microphone, seat belt, harness, relief tube, and so forth, can simply be viewed as an extension of that phallus. Some of the nicknames assigned by the folk to the various types of aircraft clearly indicate their phallic associations, including the previously mentioned "White Rocket," for the T-38 trainer; "Habu, the Black Snake," for the SR-71 supersonic reconnaissance plane; "Stinger," for the AC-119 gunship; "Puff, the Magic Dragon," for the AC-47 gunship; "B.U.F." or "Big Ugly Fucker," for the B-52 bomber; "Hun," for the F-100 fighter; and "Fat Albert," for the C-5A transport.

Freud himself recognized the relationship between the male genitals, flight, and flying machines, as well as their merger in fantasy, as reflected in the symbolism of the dream:

The peculiar property of this member of being able to raise itself upright in defiance of the law of gravity, part of the phenomenon of erection, leads to a symbolic representation by means of *balloons, aeroplanes*, and just recently, *zeppelins*. But dreams have another, much more impressive way of symbolizing erection; they make the organ of sex into the essential part of the whole person, so that the *dreamer himself flies*.<sup>9</sup>

As Freud indicates, phallic associations are not suggested simply through a similarity in configuration, but in the important identification of the phallus as both the vehicle of flight, as well as the connecting link with the flying mechanism through which the dreamer is actually given the power of flight. Further evidence of this apparent fusion of man and machine into one sexual entity, reinforced through the imagery of phallic aggression, may be found in the name "Roger Ramjet," given to an imaginary character said

9. Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Joan Riviere (New York, 1935), 138.

to personify the gung-ho pilot; in the expression "night bomber," used to describe a sexually active pilot; and in the phrase "he busted his balls," employed to describe a pilot who has crash-landed his aircraft.

For an Air Force pilot, the year of student training comes to a climax in a formal graduation ceremony during which the "stud" officially and publicly "gets his wings." In literal terms this expression refers to the pair of silver wings he may now wear proudly on his chest, indicating to the rest of the world that in a very van Gennepian sense he has left the ranks of the uninitiated, has undergone the strenuous rites of incorporation, and has now become a full member of his group. On another level, however, these wings serve as a tangible, yet somehow transitory symbol of his virility; his to keep only as long as he can continue to prove himself a man and keep flying. Pilots often call the wings "leg spreaders," in reference to their supposed ability to attract and overwhelm women, presumably as a kind of phallic advertisement.<sup>10</sup>

This apparent association of winged symbols with the concept of virility is not simply coincidental, nor is it unique in this context. Similar evidence in art dates back at least to the Classical world where, for example, winged phalluses were used to decorate Roman terra cotta lamps, doorways, and women's jewelry.<sup>11</sup> The use of this design on objects that are generally acknowledged as being symbolic of the female principle has a contemporary parallel, for when the Air Force pilot receives his wings at graduation, they are ritually "pinned on" by a close female relative, usually a wife. The traditional graduation gift given to a husband is similarly some article, such as a plaque,<sup>12</sup> beer mug, or key chain, which bears a facsimile of these wings. In order to share in the accomplishment, a wife or girl friend might purchase a tiny copy of the wings to wear around her neck.<sup>13</sup>

10. Note the use of the expression "get your red wings" to describe oral relations with a woman during her menses.

11. Jean Marcade, *Roma Amore: Essay on Erotic Elements in Etruscan and Roman Art* (Geneva, 1961), 97.

12. Below the wings is pasted a copy of the poem "High Flight," by Magee, which concludes, "And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod / The high untrespassed sanctity of space, / Put out my hand, and touched the face of / God." See note 16.

13. A healthy regard for the power of the wings is expressed through a fear of flying with the original pair received on graduation day (a precaution against female

If the pilot, the "stud" who has now become a "stick," represents a phallus, if the airplane serves as an extension of that phallus, and if the presumed pattern of sexual symbolism is correct, then it is reasonable to assume that a correspondingly female object must also exist. A popular poem, found in every student pilot's yearbook, clearly indicates who or what that recipient object might be: "He'll have a lot to be proud of / He'll hold his head up high, / When he pins on silver wings / That symbols conquering the sky."<sup>14</sup> The air, the sky, the atmosphere become animate, existing to be conquered, possessed, perhaps even humiliated. As Fleming MacLiesh, a World War II Royal Air Force pilot, described his first solo flight in poetry:

Turning on empty air to circle field  
 Seems like the crossing of death, maybe or—  
 Actually—your first woman, to proffer, yield  
 You infinite possibilities. . . .  
 Bearing you like a girl, the atmosphere  
 Spreads itself to you now. This is your place.<sup>15</sup>

John Gillespie Magee Jr., an American in the Canadian Royal Air Force, similarly expressed the act of flight in terms of erotic, genital imagery, "I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung / My eager craft through footless halls of air / Up, up the long delirious burning blue. . . ."<sup>16</sup> An examination of the folk speech reveals the following examples replete with sexual connotations and explicit allusions to human sexual activities: the act of flying is described as "poking" or "boring holes in the sky"; specific maneuvers include "busting a ceiling" and "going down through the deck"; putting full power to the throttles is flying "balls to the wall"; a flight is a "ride," and flying time is "stick time."

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pollution?), which is repeated in verse: "If you fly with the wings with which you learn / You will surely crash and burn." In order to avoid any such disaster, the husband and wife will grasp each end of the wings and break them apart. The pieces may then be dropped in a glass of beer so that the new pilot can ingest their power.

14. From "I Taught Him How to Fly," by Conley V. Bradford, in the Class 72-04 yearbook, Webb Air Force Base, Texas, 1972. The poem is reprinted in every graduating class's yearbook, and of the author, only his name is known.

15. From "Exploration by Air I. Solo (Teterboro Airport)," by Fleming MacLiesh, in *The Poetry of Flight: An Anthology*, ed. Selden Rodman (New York, 1941), 22-29.

16. From "High Flight," by John Gillespie Magee, Jr., in *The New Treasury of War Poetry: Poems of the Second World War*, ed. George Herbert Clarke (Boston, 1943), 268.

If flight and the control of a machine as the extension of one's body can be expressed in terms of sexual power and conquest, then, conversely, the denial of flight, the loss of control, which, in effect, becomes the loss of the virile member, may also be described in terms of the established sexual pattern. Dr. Douglas Bond, studying the psychological problems of combat pilots during the Korean War, found that many men regarded the renunciation of flight as the equivalent of self-executed castration.<sup>17</sup> A number of folk expressions reflect, if not a concern with outright castration, then certainly a preoccupation with impotence; and as Ernest Jones writes, the indication of impotence in the conscious is the equivalent of castration in the unconscious.<sup>18</sup>

The student pilot who fails in his course of training is "washed out." Known as a failure as a flier, and perhaps as a man, his only alternative is to take a "desk job," placing himself in the pitiable position of "ground-pounder," pounding away in the dirt while his friends are out poking holes in the sky. Once a pilot has successfully obtained his wings, however, he is not automatically immune to failure. Due to technical problems in take-off, he may "burn out on the ramp" and be delayed twelve hours in flight until he is figuratively able to perform again. Illness may force him to "go D.N.I.F.," an acronym for Duty Not Involving Flying, which makes public his temporary impotence and his consequently required social segregation. The ultimate failure for a pilot is to "lose his wings" or "get busted," severe punishment imposed for either physical incapability or unfortunate error in judgment. Although "getting busted" simply means losing one's rank in the other branches of the military, its Air Force usage signifies the permanent denial of flight, the loss of the winged phallus, and the final busting of one's balls.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of the number of examples thus far discussed, it would be wrong to assume that the only image reflected in Air Force folk speech is that of the aircraft as a male, phallic extension and of flight as the violation of the female, sexual object; for within the

17. Douglas D. Bond, *The Love and Fear of Flying* (New York, 1952), 26.

18. Ernest Jones, "Psychoanalysis and Folklore," in *Jubilee Congress of the Folklore Society: Papers and Transactions* (London, 1930), reprinted in *The Study of Folklore*, ed. Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965), 101.

19. A certain fascination with castration may be noted in the frequent use of the expression, "I'd give my right [go]'nad," a modification of the common American colloquialism.

corpus of collected materials, many examples explicitly point to a female identification of the aircraft as well. This apparent dichotomy may be explained in part through the writings of Freud, particularly in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in which unconscious sexual symbolism is explored. All elongated objects, such as sticks, tree-trunks, and umbrellas, are said to stand for the male organ, particularly those objects with the ability to penetrate.<sup>20</sup> As may be inferred from the elongated nose of a fuselage, and the numerous examples from the folk speech, the aptness of the airplane as a male symbol is seemingly unquestionable. But Freud further writes that "boxes, cases, chests, cupboards, ovens represent the uterus, and also hollow objects, ships and vessels of all kinds."<sup>21</sup> A probable source of confusion thus becomes obvious, for while the fuselage is elongated and capable of penetration, it is also hollow and able to carry and then disgorge men, ordinance, and cargo.

Interpretation through strictly Freudian, genital symbolism does not, however, provide a complete answer. Also to be considered is modern Western man's seemingly inevitable tendency to anthropomorphize or animate the machines with which he is in close and constant contact, particularly if they possess a strength greater than his own, as well as a technical sophistication that allows them to perform in response and in harmony with his own desires. A relationship may eventually develop that is more reminiscent of one between human beings than between man and machine.

If an airplane is to be given the characteristics and personality of a human being, then it is given those of a female human being. As Fred Hamann writes in his aviation dictionary, "An airplane is a lady, and is always referred to as 'she.'"<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, the pilot may play the male protective role, looking after the plane's needs, speaking proudly of it, comparing its abilities to all others, and feeling great affection for it. T. H. G. Ward sees the ritual-like reading of check-lists and its accompanying performance preparatory to flight, as being similar to, and perhaps even symbolic of, the sexual relationship between men and women, in which the simple,

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20. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York, 1958), 354.

21. Ibid.

22. Fred Hamann, *Air Words: A Popular Aviation Definitionary* (Superior, 1945), 47.



yet successful execution of prescribed steps may alone be sufficient for satisfaction.<sup>23</sup>

Numerous examples from the folk speech of pilots serve to establish both the female and the overt sexual nature of the airplane in this context. Historically popular terms have included "crate," "hot crate," and "rattle box." According to the *Dictionary of American Slang*, "crate" may be used to refer to any automobile, truck, bus, ship, or airplane, dilapidated or not, as well as to any unattractive female.<sup>24</sup> In a somewhat similar fashion, "hog" and "pig," used in colloquial American speech to describe an ugly, unappealing woman, are also used to describe a poor flying aircraft. The term "box," with its obvious sexual symbolism, is commonly used in civilian male slang to refer to the female genitals. In addition, a plane that has suffered damage or abuse is described as being "broke," "sick," or "busted," words also used to describe conditions resulting from sexual excess or conditions exempting a female from such activities.

An example of the way in which the act of flight and the nature of a pilot's relationship with an aircraft may find itself expressed in openly erotic terms is illustrated by a piece of folk verse suggestively titled "The First Time":

She was a honey, she was one of the best,  
That night I put her to the test.  
She looked so sweet, so pretty, so trim,  
The night was dark, the moon was dim.

I was so excited, my heart missed a beat,  
For I knew I was in for a helluva treat.  
I'd seen her stripped, I'd seen her bare,  
I'd felt her over everywhere.

I got inside her, she screamed with joy,  
That was the first time, Oh boy! Oh boy!  
I got up quickly, as quickly as I could,  
I handled her gently, I knew she was good.

I rolled her over, then on her side,  
Then on her back I also tried.

23. T. H. G. Ward, "The Psychological Relationship between Man and Aircraft," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 24 (1951): 288.

24. Harold Wentworth and Stuart Berg Flexner, *Dictionary of American Slang* (New York, 1960), 128.

She was just one high thrill, the best in the land,  
That ——— of the ——— Command.<sup>25</sup>

In light of this poem, it is interesting to note that Bond found the behavior of pilots who had been temporarily grounded to be strikingly similar to that of frustrated lovers—restless and unhappy, yearning for a relief that only flying could bring.<sup>26</sup>

Associations of this kind may reveal a deeper, and perhaps darker side to the simple identification of an airplane with a woman. During both World War II and the Korean War, individual planes were given personalized names by their pilots and crews. Nicknames like "Violent Virgin," "Burma Virgin," "Ex-Virgin," "Impatient Virgin," "Hump-Happy," "Dirtie Gertie," and "Messy Bessy" ascribed a definite sexual nature to the airplane, a demanding and insatiable nature, requiring more, perhaps, than the pilot may have felt capable of giving. Fear of sexual demands, coupled with the fear of failing those demands (which are then projected onto the object itself), may change affection to contempt. Evidence of this attitude is clearly reflected in song parodies from the Vietnam War, where an airplane is described as "smokin' like a two-dollar whore," or is told to "climb, you friggin' whore."<sup>27</sup>

Fear and anxiety may also find their expression in another form of displacement, in the belief that high altitude flight and the resultant breathing of pure oxygen under pressure may result in impotency or sterility. Apparently functioning in much the same manner as the G.I. saltpeter syndrome,<sup>28</sup> it can be used to explain away a pilot's lack of interest in establishing or maintaining relationships with women; for according to Bond, one of the outstanding characteristics of the pilot who derives intensive gratification from flying is the conflict he has with women, the result of his consuming interest in flight and his tendency to make the aircraft the object of his erotic love.<sup>29</sup> Responses gathered from transport pilots

25. Anonymous poem reprinted in *Air Force Airs: Songs and Ballads of the U.S. Air Force, World War I through Korea*, ed. William Wallrich (New York, 1957), 60.

26. Bond, 23.

27. From "Old Smokey," reprinted in Maj. Joseph F. Tusso, *Folksongs of the American Fighter Pilot in Southeast Asia, 1967-1968*, Folklore Forum Bibliographic and Special Series, No. 7, (Bloomington, 1971), 15 and from "The Sandy Cannonball," collected from Col. Alton Brugger, 1973.

28. See George W. Rice and David P. Jacobs, "Saltpeter: A Folkloric Adjustment," *Western Folklore*, 32 (1973): 164-179.

29. Bond, 25.

interviewed during this study seem to indicate that for them, the continuing desire for flight was not the manifestation of a simple case of sublimation or the redirection of normal sexual desires, but that the love and need for flight could be temporarily sublimated in relationships with human beings—a situation denied by one informant who then immediately recounted a joke about the fighter pilot who could only achieve sexual stimulation, as well as satisfaction, while masturbating to the fantasy of flying his plane.

From the evidence thus far presented, it becomes obvious that a definite dichotomy in the nature of the airplane, as it is perceived by the Air Force pilot, is reflected in the folk speech. Here it appears as both male and female in identity, as both active sexual tool and passive sexual object. The overlapping of these dual images is perhaps best seen in the use of the word "bird," the folk term most commonly used to refer to an airplane. On the surface, "bird" seems to be an obvious and literal reference to the fact that an airplane, a man-made machine, does indeed fly like a bird. But a deeper examination shows that in colloquial American speech "bird" also means a phallus (as in the popular catchphrase "How's your bird?"), as well as a sexually attractive woman (in British slang, a prostitute). If proponents of the symbolic psychoanalytic school of interpretation are correct, the duality expressed in "bird" predates its contemporary usage. Arthur Wormhoudt points out that although "bird" has been established through clinical and linguistic evidence to be an undeniable symbol of the phallus (a random examination shows the slang term for penis to be "bird" or "little bird" in a variety of languages, including Indonesian, Italian, and Chinese, as well as English), since pre-Classical times, it has served as a symbol of the female breast, supplying rain and sustenance, as well as artistic inspiration.<sup>30</sup>

This duality of image does not seem to present a problem to speakers. There is no sense of self-consciousness in the articulation of conflicting images. Evidence from actual usage seems to indicate a predominance of the male identity when pilots speak in the abstract—of flight as a concept or of aircraft in terms of generic types. When speaking specifically of a particular plane or moment of flight, then the female image is employed. Sexual identity may well

30. Arthur Wormhoudt, "The Unconscious Bird Symbol in Literature," *American Imago*, 7 (1950): 173-182.

be determined by the physical disposition of an aircraft, for when it is in the air and in performance it seems to become a physical part of the pilot's body, while on the ground and apart, it takes on a semi-human character, with a distinct female personality. Evidence of the conflict of image and the apparent lack of self-consciousness in usage is particularly obvious in a song parody collected in Southeast Asia which begins, "I'm a thud pilot, I love my plane; / It is my body, I am its brain; / My thunderchief loves me, and I love her too."<sup>31</sup>

Air Force pilot folk speech has thus revealed the existence of two separate yet related fantasies. The first, an Oedipal manifestation, involves the possession of a huge and powerful phallus capable of penetrating the heavens themselves, so that the pilot, as expressed in the frequently quoted poem "High Flight," may dare to reach out and touch the face of a patriarchal God. The second line of fantasy describes a coupling with an equally powerful female object, responding entirely to the desire and control of the pilot within its body, a wishful reversal, perhaps, of the actual mother/child relationship. The similarity in fantasy, aside from the obvious release from sexually oriented frustrations, derives from the fact that when taken to conclusion, each fantasy terminates in failure, impotency, and finally, castration. Both involve the struggle to achieve orgiastic pleasure in the face of continual fear and anxiety over the probability of the pleasure being suddenly snatched away; in one case by the angry, all-powerful father, the "big brass" who arbitrarily "bust balls," and in the other, by the demanding, castrating mother, the love object itself.

Evidence also indicates the equation of flight with masculinity and its resultant manifestations of phallic aggression; a tendency to attribute human sexual characteristics to man-made machines (the ultimate extension of man's tendency to humanize the non-human); and a sense of confusion between the sex act and the act of flight, for (according to informants) one can only be described in terms of the other. Fear of failure in training, of failure to maintain control of the aircraft, or of failure to retain the right to flight may be alleviated through the mechanism of projection. As a defensive reaction, internal fears and hostilities may be projected

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31. Tuso, 23, from "The Thud."

onto the external, inanimate object itself so that it is the aircraft that threatens the pilot, not his own weakness or inability.<sup>32</sup> Negative feelings are thus released, but reinforced as well, particularly through the female identification of the aircraft, where its dependent yet demanding nature is emphasized. Rejection of its female qualities leads to reinforced patterns of protest masculinity, and a greater and more anxiety-producing concern with virile display.

In conclusion, it appears that by employing the techniques of depth psychology, a study of folk speech may move beyond the more superficial collection of glosses, classification, and etymology, and focus instead upon deeper meanings, more pervasive patterns, and previously undisclosed motivations. As Roger Abrahams notes, once it is realized that "all methods and modes of expression exist for some purpose, conscious or unconscious, then perceptive psychological analysis will be able to lay bare the form behind the expression, and more fully expose both the form and function in which the expression has been embodied."<sup>33</sup>

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32. For a discussion of the nature of projection in folklore see Alan Dundes, "Projection in Folklore: A Plea For Psychoanalytic Semiotics," *Modern Language Notes* 91 (1976): 1500-1533.

33. Roger D. Abrahams, "Folklore in Culture: Notes Toward an Analytic Method," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 5 (1963): 108-109.